



NEWS RELEASE

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Alamogordo Agents Locate Methamphetamine Stash in Late Model Ford Truck

Trap Door Hides 12 Bundles of Narcotics Commonly called "Speed"

EL PASO, Texas -- U.S. Border Patrol agents at the highway traffic checkpoint outside of Alamogordo, NM discovered more than 27 pounds of methamphetamine powder this morning inside a trap door hidden behind the air bag of a late model Ford pickup.

The seizure, which was made at approximately 8:00 a.m., resulted when a 1997 Ford truck driven by a 52-year old U.S. Citizen, pulled into the Border Patrol Traffic Checkpoint, on Highway 54. The driver displayed strange mannerisms and had difficulty answering simple questions posed to him by agents at the checkpoint. The driver, identified as Joaquin Martinez –Urbano, consented to a search by a Border Patrol canine. The dog immediately alerted to the passenger side quarter panel area near the vehicle firewall. Further inspection led agents to a trap door concealing 12 bundles wrapped in black tape. The bundles contained a white powdery substance that was later tested and confirmed to be methamphetamine.

This seizure of methamphetamine, valued at \$800,000, is the first of Fiscal Year 2003 for the El Paso Sector. It is also the sector's largest single seizure of that illegal substance in the past three years.

In Fiscal Year 2002, El Paso Sector agents made 85 total seizures of drugs other than marijuana, cocaine and heroin, valued at \$1.2 million. Agents say it is rare to encounter a volume of methamphetamine of this magnitude. Last week, agents in Alamogordo seized 120 pounds of cocaine at a traffic checkpoint, in a late model SUV.

~ USBP ~

*****VHS video available to interested members of the media.***